

**History of Political Theory I
Might and Right**

PS 3201-01
Spring 2020
Political Science
Instructor: Dr. Chris Barker
Course time: Sunday and Wednesday 10:00am-11:15am Course location: WALEED C149
Instructor email and phone: chris.barker@aucegypt.edu ; ext. 4203
Office hours: Sunday and Wednesday 11:15am-12:15pm or by appointment Office location: HUSS, Room 2015
Course Catalog Description
<p>Analysis of the thought of the major contributors, from Plato to the present. Fall semester (301): ancient and medieval political philosophy and the modern break with traditions. Spring semester (302): main currents of modern thought.</p> <p>2020 Spring Semester Description</p> <p>Who rules, and why is political rule legitimate? Is there a single form of legitimate regime, as for example George W. Bush argues on behalf of democracy, or are there many types of regimes, and/or different regimes that are appropriate for different times and places? Students will use ancient sources, and selected modern and contemporary commentaries, to examine the creation of empires and cities, republics and democracies and beyond. Students will analyze power as it is exercised legitimately and effectively. Among other areas, students will consider Egyptian and Persian imperial practices, the Greek city, and Rome in its many transformations from monarchy to republic to empire. Students will also consider relations within the city, including slavery, gender, individual liberties, democratic self-government, and selected Islamic and Christian criticisms of the ancient city. By the end of the course, students will be familiar with the diverse range of regimes theorized by pre-modern political thinkers.</p> <p>Learning Outcomes</p> <p>At the end of the course, the successful student will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Demonstrate familiarity with the major authors, concepts, and arguments of ancient political theory- Identify the unit of analysis of classical political theory, and its complication in the form of empire- Identify and explain the differences between the types of political regimes- Demonstrate familiarity with selected ancient thinkers' contributions to contemporary political science

- Explain political theory's contribution to selected subfields of the discipline of Political Science
- Engage in persuasive analytical writing, as assessed through substantial, original papers on assigned topics in the history of political theory

Course Goals

This course will develop the students' abilities to think critically and to read analytically in the core texts of the history of political thought.

Prerequisites: RHET 1010, RHET 1020, RHET 1100, RHET 2010, POLS 1001 or POLS 2003

Course Grading Requirements:

Participation in classroom discussions: 20%, including occasional inverted classroom assignments/group work (15%) and debates (5%)

Presentations: 1 student presentation = 5%

Writing assignments and pop quizzes: 15% (each student will choose and complete five writing assignments = 3% each)

Paper 1: 30% due at midnight on March 14

Take-home exam paper: 30% due no later than the conclusion of our scheduled exam slot

Grading:

94%-100%-	A	"A" grades confirm exceptional, extraordinary effort and results
90%-93%-	A-	
87%-89%-	B+	"B" grades confirm effort exceeding average and high quality work.
84%-86%-	B	
80%-83%-	B-	
77%-79%-	C+	"C" grades confirm average and satisfactory work.
74%-76%-	C	
70%-73%-	C-	
65%-69%	D+	"D" grades confirm less than satisfactory effort and less than adequate work.
55%-65%	D	
55% and below	F	"F" grades confirm far less than sufficient effort and results or may be given in response to a violation of academic integrity.

Readings:

We have a handful of primary-source texts and authors in this course. The course is about the theories expressed in these texts, which is an expanded version of the traditional political theory canon, in that it includes two tragedies (poetry), two epics (poetry), histories (including the first

history), treatises on political theory and rhetoric, and speeches. We also intend to think about how to challenge, improve, and hybridize the canon. The course includes several contemporary authors writing today about ancient thought, and also contemporary authors writing about ancient political history.

All texts (primary and secondary) will be posted to Blackboard under the appropriate dates. In addition, reliable recommended works giving students an overview of the authors and their major themes and arguments will be posted to Blackboard in a separate folder. The chapters and articles in this folder (“Recommended Readings”) are not required reading.

The instructor reserves the right to alter the schedule of topics and readings if necessary

Presentations:

Students will be required to make at least one presentations during the semester. The presentation readings (indicated in the syllabus below) will be posted on Blackboard under “Presentation Readings.” Students will sign up for presentations on Wednesday of Week I. Presentations are typically multimedia and take no less than five minutes and no more than fifteen minutes.

Writing assignments:

Writing assignments (approx. 300 words) will be submitted on Blackboard by midnight *two days before* the indicated class meeting. E.g., the Feb. 5 writing assignment will be submitted by 11:59pm on Feb. 3. Students’ writing assignments should include parenthetical references to the week’s reading, in the format laid out in the course Style Guide posted online. E.g., (author date, page#).

Exam:

The final exam will be a comprehensive take-home examination due at the end of the exam timeslot scheduled for this class. Since this is an exam, absolutely no late exams will be accepted for any reason that is not covered by a prior accommodation discussed in person and in advance with the course instructor. As per AUC policy, no collaboration on exams is permitted.

Syllabus:

Week 1 (Feb. 2 and 5): Overview and Introduction to Regime-Types

Feb. 2:

Introduction to the syllabus: regime-types and democracy, the only legitimate regime?
Class discussion: What are the basic regime-types?

Feb. 5:

Kenneth Minogue, *Politics: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1-9 (recommended); 10-18 (required)
Taha Hussein, *The Future of Culture in Egypt*, 1-10.

Recommended (but not required): Robert Chadwick, *First Civilizations*, on Egypt’s dynastic political history (Old, Middle, Amarna, and New Kingdom periods)

Class discussion: Egypt's political moments and the different types of regimes.

Writing Assignment: When was Egypt's greatest political moment? What type of regime was it in that moment? Explain using the Taha Hussein reading, and refer to any or all of Pharaonic, Greek/Mediterranean, Persian, Turkish, Roman, French, British (and, if need be) other political cultures, but give your own opinion/analysis.

2. Part I: Foundations of International Relations and Comparative Politics

Week 2 (Feb. 9 and 12):

Feb. 9: The Epic of Gilgamesh and Ancient Mesopotamia

The Epic of Gilgamesh, excerpt; Chadwick, *First Civilizations*, 101-106.

Classroom discussion: Was Gilgamesh a good ruler? What is the meaning and importance of the "rule of law," and does Hammurabi achieve it?

Presentation: The Code of Hammurabi; Chadwick, *First Civilizations*, 60-70.

Feb. 12: The Old Testament on kingship

Robert Alter, *The David Story: A Translation with Commentary of 1 and 2 Samuel*, excerpts

Recommended: Robert Alter, "To the Reader," *The David Story*, xv-xxiv

Presentation: Geoffrey P. Miller, "The Kingdom of God in Samuel"

Week 3 (Feb. 16 and 19):

Feb. 16: Homer, *The Iliad*, excerpts from Book I, II, and IX (Quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles, Thersites' complaint, the call to retreat, and the embassy to Achilles) and excerpts from the movie, *Troy* (watched and discussed in class)

Presentation: Dean Hammer, "Who Shall Readily Obey?": Authority and Politics in the 'Iliad,'" *Phoenix* 51, 1 (1997): 1-24.

Writing assignment: Who has the best argument to rule over the Greeks, Agamemnon or Achilles, and why they should rule? (You will be aided, if need be, by looking at the Lattimore introduction and/or the presentation reading.)

Feb. 19: Sophocles, *Antigone* (pp. 1-11, from Creon's decree to the illegal burial of Polyneices); Confucius' reply to the Duke of She; Mencius; Cicero, *On Duties* (brief excerpt)

Classroom discussion: What is one's basic commitment—to family, to religious tradition, or to the state? Can a state make a bad law?

Presentation: A comparison of Greek and Confucian political theory (TBD)

Presentation: Judith Butler, *Antigone's Claim*, excerpt.

Week 4 (Feb. 23 and 26)

Feb. 23 Herodotus

Herodotus, *History*, excerpts Book I

Presentation: Huang Yang, "Orientalism in the Ancient World: Greek and Roman Images of the Orient from Homer to Virgil," 115-129.

Presentation: Susan McWilliams, "Hybridity in Herodotus," *Political Research Quarterly* 66, 4 (2013), pp. 745-755

Writing assignment: Does Herodotus blame the East for the war between East and West? Why/not?

Feb. 26 Spartan Freedom

Recommended: Edward Tsoukalidis, "Growing up in Sparta: Boys and the Agoge"

Herodotus, *History*, excerpt, 7.175-7.239 (The 300 at Thermopylae)

Presentation: Describe to the class (using video clips and your analysis) the depiction of Spartans and Persians in the film *The 300*. Who are the "good guys" supposed to be, and *why* are they good?

Writing Assignment: Which contemporary regime is most like ancient Sparta, and which is most like Persia? (E.g., is it Egypt, Israel, the US, Canada? Why?) Explain your answer by referring to the readings on Sparta.

Week 5 (March 1 and 4): Thucydides on Athens vs. Sparta

Mar. 1: Thucydides' "Possession for all time"

The Fifty Years' rise of Athenian power in Thucydides, *History*, Book I; Michael Doyle, *Empires*, 51-53

Presentation: Michael Doyle, *Empires*, 54-82.

Presentation: Laurie M. Johnson Bagby, "The Use and Abuse of Thucydides in International Relations," *International Organization* 48, 1 (1994): 131-153.

Mar. 4: Athenian Freedom

Thucydides, *History*, 2.30-2.54 (Pericles' Funeral Oration) and Paul Cartledge, "Democracy, Origins of," 1-8

Presentation: Jakub Filonik, "'Living as One Wishes' in Athens: The (Anti-)Democratic Polemics," *Classical Philology* 114 (2019): 1-24.

Writing Assignment: What type and amount of freedom does Pericles and democratic Athens promise? Is it the individual freedom to do anything, or the collective freedom to be independent of those who want to enslave our city/people? Or both?

Week 6 (March 8 and 11):

Mar. 8: Is Might Right? Formal Debate

Thucydides, *History*, excerpts (The Mytilinean Debate and the Melian Dialogue)

In-class debate: the class will hold a formal debate on the following question: Is it right to betray your allies and break your treaties, if it is to your own advantage to do so?

Mar. 11: Empire and its Discontents

Thucydides, *History*, on the Sicilian Expedition; Plato, *Seventh Letter*

Presentation on Athenian imperialism: P.J. Rhodes, "Democracy and Empire," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Pericles*, 24-45.

First paper due (11:59pm, March 14)

Week 7 (March 15 and 18): Plato on the Virtuous City

Mar. 15 Plato, *Republic*, Book I, as argument for tyranny or against tyranny?

Presentation: Timothy L. Simpson, "Is Socrates the Ideal Democratic Citizen?" *Journal of Thought* 41, 4 (2006): 137-156.

Writing Assignment: After reading Book I of the *Republic*, choose one of the theories of justice presented in the text, and explain why it is the best one.

Mar. 18 Plato, *Republic*, Book III-IV on censorship and religion

In-class activity: Censoring music and poetry and identifying a civic mode of music; censoring the Homer gods

Presentation on Greek erotic practices: Andrew Lear and Eva Cantarella, *Images of Ancient Greek Pederasty*, xv, 1-19

Week 8 (March 22 and 25):

Mar. 22: Plato, *Republic*, Book V on the three ridiculous waves

In-class activity: Student mock trial (with two accusers, defendant, and jury): Should our democracy execute Socrates for corrupting the youth and introducing new gods into the city?

Presentation: For our benefit, please simplify the procedure described in this article (Edward M. Harris, *The Athenian View of an Athenian Trial*)

Mar. 25: Plato, *Republic*, Book VII-VIII on the Cave and the five types of regimes

Student competition: Drawing the Cave

Class discussion: What is the cave? Technology, the city, and the best regime.

Presentation: Mojtaba Mahdavi, "Ayatollah Khomeini," in *Key Islamic Political Thinkers*, 104-138.

Presentation: Discuss the film *The Matrix* and its red/blue pills and virtual reality. Is this Plato's cave? Why/not?

Writing assignment: Where does democracy fit in the ranking of regimes, and do you think it should be higher or lower in the ranking? Explain with reference to 2011 in Egypt and *Republic* Book 8.

Course drop deadline (undergraduate): March 26

Week 9 (March 29 and April 1):

Mar. 29: Aristotle on the City, the household, and accumulation, *Politics*, Book I

Presentation: Bernard Yack, *The Problems of a Political Animal* (1993), excerpts.

Writing Assignment: If Aristotle is wrong about "natural slavery," why is he wrong? Is his error simply a product of the unenlightened age in which he lived, or does he express his own normative political theory of slavery, for better or for worse?

April 1: Aristotle on the citizen and inclusivity, *Politics*, Book III

Class discussion: Should we include the farmers and artisans among the citizens who have political rights? Why/not?

Presentation: Thornton Lockwood, "Aristotle and the Non-Greek Other," working paper.

Week 10 (April 5 and 8): Roman Republicanism

Apr. 5 Livy, *Early History of Rome*, Book II (republican revolution, republican heroes);

Minogue, *Politics: A Very Short Introduction*, 19-24; Tom Holland, "Preface," in *Rubicon: The Triumph and Tragedy of the Roman Republic*.

Presentation: Robert Goodin, "Folie Républicaine," *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.* 6 (2003): 55-76.

Writing Assignment: Does Rome become more or less public-spirited and virtuous, according to Livy, after the revolution? Explain why/not and state whether you think his basic point is right/wrong (your opinion).

Apr. 8 Cicero's Republicanism

Cicero, *On the Commonwealth*, Book I, 1-39a; Philip Pettit, *On the People's Terms*, 82-92; "Roman Slavery"

Presentation: Edward J. Watts, *Mortal Republic*, Chapter 10

Class discussion: Is the Roman mixed regime the best way of handling political corruption and cyclic decline?

Week 11 (April 12 and 15):

Apr. 12 Holiday

Apr. 15 Holiday

Week 12 (April 19 and 22):

Apr. 19 Holiday

Apr. 22 Cicero's Orations

Aristotle, *Rhetoric* (excerpt on three types of rhetoric)

"On Behalf of Marcellus" and "Against Catiline," in *Ten Speeches*

Presentation: R.R. Dyer, "Rhetoric and Intention in Cicero's Pro Marcello," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 80 (1990), 17-30

Presentation: Compare the following two short writings and decide whether you think Donald Trump is like Catiline or Cicero, or both, or neither: Julie Zauzmer, “Donald Trump, the Cicero of 2016” and Jaime Gonzalez-Ocana, “Is Donald Trump a Modern Day Catiline?”

Writing response: Is Catiline a demagogue and a danger to the republic, or is Cicero (who ordered his execution without trial, apparently against Roman law) the danger to the republic? Explain with reference to Cicero’s orations.

Week 13 (April 26 and 29):

Apr. 26 Barry Strauss, *The Death of Caesar*, xv-xx, 67-106

Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, Act I-III (video excerpts linked on BB)

Presentation: Christopher Pelling, “Judging Julius Caesar,” 3-26.

Class discussion: How does persuasion occur in Antony’s speech at Caesar’s funeral?

Apr. 29 Formal debate

Imagine that you are Brutus, and that the conspirators have come in the night to your house: Would you join the conspiracy to kill Caesar? Yes or no?

Writing Assignment: Was it just for the Roman conspirators to kill Caesar? Provide an argument for and against, but make sure that you choose a side and offer a brief, textually-grounded defense of your position!

Week 14 (May 3 and 6):

May 3: Paul, “Letter from Paul to the Romans,” *World History in Documents*, 74-77; Augustine, *City of God* (excerpts on sack of Rome, heroes, the Ciceronian republic, and Roman justice)

Presentation: Paul J. Cornish, “Augustine’s Contribution to the Republican Tradition,” *EJPT* 9, 2 (2010), 133-148.

Writing assignment: What does Augustine mean when he writes that there never *was* a Roman republic? What is his standard of republicanism, and how does Rome fail to measure up?

May 6: Medieval Islamic Thought

Alfarabi, “The Political Regime,” 1-22.

Presentation: Weeds: Michael S. Kochin, “Cultivating the Imagination in Medieval Arabic Political Philosophy,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 60, 3 (1999), 399-416.

Presentation: Alfarabi, “Book of Religion,” in *Alfarabi: The Political Writings*, 93-113.

Week 15 (May 10 and 13): History and Overview

May 10: The Hindu caste system: BR Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste* and Arundhati Roy, “Introduction,” excerpt.

Presentation: Martha Nussbaum, “Untouchable: Review of *Annihilation of Caste: The Annotated Critical Edition*.”

Writing assignment: Is Ambedkar correct that modern Indian liberty can’t exist without changing the whole caste system? Can it be slowly modified or improved without revolutionary change?

May 13: Wrap-up and discussion of culture and identity

John Malcolm Russell, *The Final Sack of Nineveh: The Discovery, Documentation, and Destruction of King Sennacherib’s Throne Room at Nineveh, Iraq*, short excerpt.

Discussion: The destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas (2001, Afghanistan under the Taliban) and the looting of the Baghdad Museum (2003, Iraq during the Second Gulf War).

Presentation: James Cuno, *Who Owns Antiquity: Museums and the Battle over Our Ancient Heritage*, 1-16.

Presentation: Salima Ikram, "Collecting and Repatriating Egypt's Past: Toward a New Nationalism," in *Contested cultural heritage: Religion, nationalism, erasure, and exclusion in a global world* (pp.141-154)

Final exam during exam week

Participation

The participation grade recognizes contributions to classroom discussion by students. Prepared students who actively contribute to classroom discussion and debate by asking and answering questions will receive higher participation grades. A rough participation grade will be posted to Blackboard prior to the midterm. The *final* participation grade may improve or decrease depending on student performance in the second half of the course.

Attendance policy

Typically, attendance will be taken each class. If you have more than three weeks of unexcused absences, you have not completed the course requirements and will receive a failing grade. This is AUC policy and will be enforced in this class. Students will be informed of this status by email after the third week of absence. Written work that is due in class, or tests that are taken in class, cannot be made up or taken at a later date in the case of unexcused absences. For more information, please see the AUC attendance policy (<http://catalog.aucegypt.edu/content.php?catoid=27&navoid=1333>).

Electronic devices and Classroom Demeanor:

The use of electronic devices such as cellphones and laptop computers is prohibited. There is a reason for this. (See Mueller and Oppenheimer, "The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking," *Psychological Science* 25 (2014): 1159–1168. In a nutshell, laptop note-takers "performed significantly worse on the conceptual questions" and wrote notes that had "more verbatim overlap with the lecture." The use of cellphones or laptops in class, or distracting or egregiously discourteous behavior, including arriving late, may result in a mark of absent for that class.

Students who arrive more than five minutes late to class may be denied entry to the classroom for that session.

Mid-Term and Final Essays:

The midterm paper will be approximately 8-10 double-spaced pages (2500-3000 words) in length. The final paper (take-home exam) will be 10-12 pages (3000-3500 words) in length. Each paper will address one assigned question that will allow students to use their "toolbox" of concepts and theoretical approaches to address an important theme in the history of political thought. These are argumentative papers. Students will be called upon to defend a thesis and to support that thesis using evidence.

Services for Students with Disabilities

AUC seeks to maintain a supportive academic environment for students with disabilities. To ensure their equal access to all educational programs, activities and services, students with disabilities should notify the university, provide documentation, and request reasonable accommodations. If a student has a documented disability and wants to request special accommodations, please contact Student Disability Services (SDS) at extension 3918 or sds@aucegypt.edu (located in the Office of Wellbeing/Dean of Students). See: <http://in.aucegypt.edu/student-life/student-well-being/disability-services>

To be accepted, accommodation letters should be presented to the instructor well in advance of any assignment or exam and/or at the beginning (first or second week) of the semester.

AUC complies with the American Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and offers numerous facilities available to help you with your educational endeavors.

Policy on Academic integrity

Academic integrity includes a commitment neither to engage in nor tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation, or deception. Prohibited acts include cheating or copying, plagiarizing, submitting another person's work as one's own, using Internet or other sources without citation, fabricating field data or citations, stealing examinations, tampering with the academic work of another student, facilitating other students' acts of academic dishonesty, etc.

Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment in question. Cheating during an examination will result in a zero grade for this examination. Further action, according to university regulations, may also be implemented.

You should be aware that all written work will typically be submitted to "Turnitin.com," the detection prevention software.

The University's statement on academic integrity, from which the above statement is drawn, is available online at:

<http://www.aucegypt.edu/academics/integrity/Pages/default.aspx>